

Generational youth: historical reverberations and their representations¹

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Abstract: This article aimed to address the generations of Brazilian and Argentine youth from the perspective of their respective representations, yesterday and today, from a comparative and connected historical perspective. This study addresses young people who lived in both modernity and post-modernity. For this, two aspects were chosen: 1) the historical periods of modernity and post-modernity, marked by historical social and cultural events that justified the appearance of thoughts, affections and actions in different times and contexts; and 2) youth culture, present in each period, considering that the approach to youth cultures of each historical period ensures greater clarity about the psychosocial dynamics of these youths.

Keywords: young brazilian and argentine generations; youth cultures; representations; modernity; postmodernity.

1 Introduction

This article aims to address the generations of Brazilian and Argentine youth from the perspective of their respective representations, yesterday and today, from a comparative and connected history perspective, whose historiographic method is characterized by the comparative approach between different societies that lived through periods and cultural conditions similar.

We highlight that the motivation for this writing by two researchers, one Brazilian and the other Argentine, developed in the context of the academic mission, carried out in 2024, in Tandil, province of Argentina.

In this way, our investigations were based on the following question: how cultures and their respective representations of youth were constituted in modernity and post-modernity. To do this, we start from the hypothesis that the construction of cultures and respective rep-

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representations of youth in modernity and post-modernity indicate differences between them, since the psychosocial contexts, experienced in each historical moment, are dynamic, complex and, therefore, full of changes that 'cross' relationships, thoughts, feelings and actions of a population, especially young people.

However, these differences do not nullify the connections with previous generations, because, without these coexisting intergenerational interactions, there would be no possibility of other representations as ancestry is fundamental in the history of human groups and respective subjects. It means that collective memory is the source of transmission of knowledge and culture from ancestors, as well as for the construction of individual memories, identities, places and belongings of subjects in social groups, according to Halbwachs (2013).

Furthermore, we add that the generations², in the case of young people, although some scholars demarcate their approaches in decades, we understand that this marking, in addition to being didactic, fulfills the role of guiding, in addition to emphasizing the characteristics that are evident in that social group.

It is important to highlight that the beginning of a generation and its end, we cannot standardize, since this depends on the evolution process of each society. It implies that transformations, on a large scale in society, happen when historical, cultural, social, economic events, among others, represent strong threats to that group or society and, then, the triggers for changes are activated. We can understand that in the opposite way, that is, when events, in addition to being subtle, are not threatening to that society, generations maintain their *modus operandi*, that is, changes in their representations are very slow and imperceptible.

In summary, the dynamic movement of historical-social events is central to understanding the process of emergence of new generations, as well as changes in the representations and identities of social groups, according to Mannheim (1993).

To address, in our study, young people who lived in both modernity and post-modernity, we chose two aspects, namely: the historical periods of modernity and post-modernity; and youth cultures, present in each period, as we consider that the approach to youth culture in each historical period ensures greater clarity about the psychosocial dynamics of these youths.

We reiterate that the markings made by historical periods: modernity and post-modernity differ in terms of political, social, cultural, artistic, philosophical, scientific, aesthetic transformations, etc. These periods were marked by historical social and cultural events that justified the appearance of thoughts, affections and actions in different eras and contexts.

² Collective of young people from similar age groups and who lived their youth 'crossed' by similar historical contexts.

The term modernity or “the modern” takes on different meanings and contents, as it depends on the discipline and historical moment to which it refers. The term is nothing new and, according to Peter Gay (2007), it seems to be a term that leads us more easily to examples than to a possible definition. Habermas (1987) observes that the first moment of modernity occurred in the 15th century. In a broader sense and, of course, closer to the present, Renaissance men already saw themselves as modern.

However, it was during the 18th century that firmer decisions were taken, as stated by the German philosopher in the *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (Habermas, 1987): a) for capital formation and resource mobilization; b) for the development of productive forces and increased labor productivity; c) for the emergence of the strength of public opinion with a view to the new “social contract” that organizes relations between the government and the governed; d) for the establishment of centralized political powers as well as the development of national identities; and e) for the dissemination of rights to political participation, forms of urban life and formal education, as well as the secularization of values and norms.

In its beginnings, modernity was linked to the Enlightenment and, in a broad sense, also to the spread of ideas produced by the French Revolution. Nicolás Condorcet’s writing, *Outline of a History of the Progress of the Human Spirit*, from 1794, gave an account of that transformative experience that combined the idea of progress associated with the need for a new philosophy.

This ideal of modernity was associated with human progress which, at the end of the 19th century, became emphatic and was linked to the following issues, such as: a) the search for laws in the Social Sciences; b) racism; c) the resurgence of aristocracy ideologies; d) strengthening the idea of economic progress; e) modernization as a social and political aspiration; and f) the dissemination of the regulated order of institutions; g) the emergence and creation of institutions, the spread of morality based on the nuclear family, repression, secrecy and oblivion (Mayer, 1986); and h) the emphasis on subjective issues such as the devaluation of the weak (Nietzsche, 2001); the disenchantment of the world (Weber, 1921) and anguish.

With the development of civilization, modernity became a comprehensive concept as it constitutes an ideal project from the perspective of human and universal aspirations. To do so, it required the development of rationality and objectivity both in questions about the organization of the nation-state. These constructions represented the structuring of the subject’s thoughts, feelings and actions and their socialization (Berger; Luckmann, 2003).

This ideology aimed to master human nature, but required the diversion of instinctual forces to the drive according to Freud (1996). We include to this the human control of natural phenomena so that the earth could be explored, domesticated and, therefore, inhabited. All of this would bring, as a consequence, a change in mentality and representations of the

modern subject which, in turn, would result in a new organization of time and space, different from the pre-modern world (Bilbao Aristimuño, 1997).

According to researchers Nascimento and Rodrigues (2018), the progress of civilization subsidized the modernity project along with the spread of capitalism. Expectations to solve the enigmas of the human condition have led scholars to seek universal, absolute truth. Berman (1986) considers that the desire for a full life in modernity has been replaced by absolute conceptions.

In short, Enlightenment ideas failed to fulfill human aspirations for freedom and happiness. Nascimento and Rodrigues (2018), in their studies, observe that the conquest of reason, as a principle of freedom of human self-knowledge and the world, destroyed traditions that to a certain extent prevented human growth and improvement. However, this project failed to achieve freedom towards Enlightenment proposals.

For Nascimento and Rodrigues (2018), modernity was the target of criticism from Frankfurt intellectuals (Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse and Walter Benjamin) about the culture it established. Such a culture of the modern era, even with advances in human inventiveness, was unable to free civilization from the dictatorship of production, the alienation of the subject and the disenchantment of the world. It means that the process of intellectualization – where reason was above all – failed to provide answers to the mysteries of humanity.

Now, at this point we ask ourselves how to think about postmodernism? Can we consider it as a continuity of the Modern era or as a different moment of modernity?

There is no consensus among authors about these denominations, since postmodernism for some authors or postmodernity for others, is represented as a historical time differentiated from the modern era.

Postmodernity emerged after the Second World War (1939-1945), precisely in 1945, but it was only in 1960 that its process of expansion across different social sectors began.

For Giddens (2006), postmodernity represented a period of transition from modernity towards the new, that is, “[...] a period of clear disparity from the past”. A period in which “[...] nothing can be known with any certainty [...]” (Giddens, 2006, p. 52).

For this author, postmodernism stands out as a historical era, which is still ongoing, and is characterized by socio-political-cultural changes, by the deconstruction of ambivalent values introduced by modernity, such as: God, Being, Reason, Consciousness, Production, State, Revolution, Family etc. We also include the expansion of the media, the cultural industry, as well as the capitalist system (market and consumption law) and globalization.

Postmodernity questions the existence of a common history that can, within the scope of knowledge, find a truth that is universal and absolute. Bauman (1998) highlights

that in postmodernity, fluidity and liquidity promote the ephemerality of events and interpersonal relationships.

In summary, the postmodern movement has the following characteristics: the absence of values and rules, imprecision, individualism, the mixture of the real and the imaginary (hyper-real), series production, spontaneity and freedom of expression.

We understand postmodernism as a combination of several trends. These trends still find their place today in the arts (plastic, architecture, literature), philosophy, politics and the social sphere.

The scholar Harvey (2004) records that post-modernity, especially since the sixties, brings discard as one of its hallmarks and this means:

[...] more than throwing away produced goods (creating a monumental problem of what to do with waste); It also means being able to throw away values, lifestyles, stable relationships, attachment to things, buildings, places, people and acquired ways of acting and being (Harvey, 2004, p. 258).

We consider that these and other advances in the postmodern era managed to transform the ways of thinking, feeling and acting of individuals and respective collectives. However, these and other transformations did not build new values in which human principles, such as respect, solidarity, equality, among others, would constitute pillars for post-modern civilization. Instead, both consumption and acquisition of material goods have become synonymous with value for the subject of postmodernity. In this way, the acquisition of material goods and excessive consumption were constituted, even though they were illusory, as mechanisms in which subjects could obtain happiness and, consequently, pleasure.

The life of the postmodern subject has turned upside down, as he is bombarded with information and advertisements that promise fulfillment and, therefore, happiness. With no time to reflect, he submits his life to the dictates of social media and the demands of what brings him permanent youth. This makes him increasingly turn to the mirror in search of an image that gives him pleasure here and now.

Guy Debord (1997), the creator of the concept of “society of the spectacle”, states that in contemporary and post-modern society, the spectacle is about a set of relationships, whose mediators are images. This type of society is maintained when there are connections between the process of capital accumulation and the process of accumulation of images, dominance and power of a social class.

In short, the society of the spectacle, according to this theorist, can only be understood based on the capitalist structure that we have in our society. This leads us to highlight that in this structure, private life is exposed as a spectacle. We cannot forget that social networks and new communication technologies contribute to this.

This tour through the modern era and post-modernity provides us with elements to think about the ground and atmosphere that mobilized the construction of social groups such as youth, as well as others to think about them, it is essential to consider the psychosocial construction that went through each group, safeguarding the different interactions and interpretations that these groups and subgroups made.

This aspect confirms and signals that when we 'look' into the historical study compared between Brazilian and Argentinean youth, it becomes clear to us that the historical track provides us with narratives that contemplate only part of these youths while the other silenced part, no less importantly, it appears distributed across other sociocultural layers. This sign must be considered by us researchers so that we are careful not to substitute the whole for the part.

The first half of the 1900s was marked by major wars, a very significant period for teenagers and young people. Before the two world wars, according to Groppo (2000), literature considered indolence, indiscipline and laziness as a characteristic of adolescents, but in the following years, the importance of their work for the conservative standards of society was considered.

During this same period, a new youth culture emerged – mobilized by industrialization – which started to edit lifestyles, where leisure, clothing and music became part of youthful expressions and behaviors. The new youth culture erases “[...] the social, demographic and sexual differences around which youth groups were structured [...] to give way to common tastes and behaviors and to intense networks of solidarity between them [...]” (Guimarães, 1995, p. 20).

Nascimento (2002), in his studies, observes that on the one hand, mass culture³ emerges to revitalize and motivate melancholic young people after the 2nd world war. On the other hand, according to Morin (1997), this culture, in addition to modeling young people's behavior, silences their critical reflections on the inequalities that mark the social contexts in which youth are lived.

The aspect that characterizes youth culture from post-modernity to contemporary times is being young. This condition mobilizes collectives, the most diverse age groups, for this purpose to this day. Whether in rejuvenation, or even the fads that appear day after day, increasingly subtle in their appeal. The permanence and unbridled search for youth led to imprisonment in the chains of images and meanings of this vast youth representational field, where the media maintains.

Youth culture has two other meanings: sometimes it is understood as a subculture because it belongs to a larger culture, that is, mass culture; and sometimes it is understood

³ It is a model of industrialized, artistic and cultural production and is characterized by being reproduced on a large scale and aimed at entertainment and commercialization (Nascimento, 2002).

as counterculture because it takes contrary positions to contest rules and values, among other issues in force in society.

2 Youth as a social category and the manifestations of youth cultures

Levi and Schmitt (1996) ask whether youth is a period of life or a permanent state; or even a period of submission to the will and approval of elders. We consider these questions much more as provocations to think about the various meanings that the expression youth incorporates throughout human history, that is, youth, such as: period of life, existential condition, immature behavior etc.

In this sense, we understand that the idea of youth as a social group was only considered since modernity. Thus, the characterization of youth began to be thought of based on the following aspects, such as: age, sex, housing, study, among other aspects sociocultural, according to Margulis and Urresti (1996). These aspects served as parameters for social classification in many societies, that is, they defined youth. Approximately between the 15th and 16th centuries, there was no clear differentiation between childhood and youth because there was a lack of differentiation between the denominations of “child” and young person, due to the fact that both names concerned minors without responsibility for their own conduct.

From the debates of scholars on childhood and youth, there was concern about the beginning and end of the phases of human development, as what characterized the beginning and end of a phase were the roles and functions that these subjects assumed in their lives, such as: leaving their family of origin, union and/or marriage and the institution of their family.

The latest studies from the year 2022 indicate that in Brazil we have 4.9% of children and adolescents between the ages of 5 and 17 who are in child labor, which is equivalent to around 1.9 million people. It is worth highlighting that the majority are brown and black, which shows that Brazil, in addition to not overcoming the historical mark on child labor, has not yet overcome, in this wake of time, the marks of the perversities of racism.

We consider that the lack of definition – in the past – about the period of development of both childhood and youth has made it difficult in some societies to delimit the responsibilities of these periods. The impacts of this lack of definition are the behaviors of so-called marginal young people, who are unaware of social rules as well as those of the family, school and other social segments (Ariès, 1981).

The solution to these behaviors would be to treat youth rigidly so that the disorders that cause “deviant” behaviors are eliminated and the young person no longer challenges the determined social order of their time.

The 18th century represented a milestone for changes in the way of thinking about youth, since the relationship between youth and society became an object of discussion. Education now has a disciplinary function, in addition to teaching important scientific content.

The school's responsibility was to maintain order and teach principles and rules based on Europe – which formed universal culture – considered of high level and, therefore, important for society. European culture printed a sign of progress in modernity and was thus permanently transmitted to young people (Bauman, 1998).

However, neither education, in general, nor the school nor the church with its indoctrination was able to contain the revolts and conflicts of youth due to disobedience to the rules and norms established in this era. These confrontations on the part of young people persisted into the modern era and were understood as characteristic of youth disorders, that is, adolescence, just as youth were seen as problematic.

It is important to add that there was a generalization of this explanation to any and all young people who exhibited behavior outside the current standards of the time. This meant that there was a universality about youth: that everyone goes through the same process without considering social diversity – sociocultural contexts – where these young people live their experiences, among others.

A partir dos avanços de estudos nos diversos campos de interesse – como a sociologia, a psicologia etc. – sobre o desenvolvimento humano e respectivas aprendizagens é que tanto a criança, quanto a adolescência e a juventude se diferenciaram (Nascimento, 2002).

Esse movimento delimitou o marco inicial e final para cada fase do desenvolvimento em função de suas especificidades, experiências de vida, maturação orgânica, contexto sociocultural, muito embora essas fases permaneçam interligadas umas às outras. Implica em observarmos os processos que se encontram, presentes em cada uma dessas fases.

Esses avanços e transformações nas concepções sobre as fases do desenvolvimento se expandiram para o campo da educação o que resultou em novas concepções sobre a criança, o adolescente, e o jovem, além da utilização de novas pedagogias e metodologias específicas para a aprendizagens em cada uma dessas fases. Dessa forma, a juventude passa a ser “[...] uma categoria social usada para classificar indivíduos, normatizar comportamentos, definir direitos e deveres [...]” (Groppo, 2000, p 11).

We can consider that youth existing in the modern era had as social representations the composition of ideational images and meanings, anchored in the following highlighted aspects: delinquency for youth behaviors that transgress the established order and irresponsibility; in living life freely without considering the rules and established values, which meant transgression was necessary; the street as well as the parties were the favorite stages for these young people's marginal actions as they escaped family surveillance.

In this way, the medical pathological model contributed to social representations that focused on mental illness, that is, illness of the mind or dysfunction of young people. It is important to note that the treatment of mental illness has made advances since the 20th century and that, therefore, as we mentioned, patience was necessary so that the subject could restructure himself in adulthood.

We emphasize that the principles of hygiene, in this historical time of modernity, functioned as security for a life without diseases, both organic and of the body and soul. Care for hygiene, education and nutrition should follow certain protocols to ensure youth with fewer conflicts.

Therefore, among the factors that favored the development of youth, such as a clearly defined age group, the following stand out: a) the regulation of access to the labor market and working conditions for children and adolescents; b) the establishment of a period of compulsory education that, in turn, it expanded over time and became increasingly important to guarantee access to work and maintenance of social status; and c) the creation of “national armies” through compulsory military service; or the regulation of voting rights.

These processes separated young people from the traditional, family economy and their dependence on inheritance laws, while at the same time distinguishing – through age – children from adults capable of working or making a conscious political choice. Although some of these institutions – such as the army or the school – were not new, their extension encompassed all social strata. Therefore, many of the “marks” of contemporary boundaries between children, young people and adults did not exist and were organized based on modernity.

We observed that the extension of the age of dependence throughout history was linked to the social structure. For example: the upper and middle classes did not maintain the same youth boundaries for women and young working-class people.

Some researchers consider that youth was “imposed” on the working class, through reformatories and the institution of middle-class philanthropic actions. These institutions’ priority was to educate young people with delinquent behavior with the aim of training “respectable and conformist” workers.

In addition to these differences depending on the social class belonging of these young people, we observed the emergence of a youth culture that fed the social, cultural and political dynamics of society. In fact, after the end of the Second World War, Western countries were the scene of a period of development that Eric Hobsbawm (2002) characterized as “the golden years”, where an idealized way of conceiving and inhabiting the world spread, the so-called “American way of life”.

This lifestyle implied a certain paradox because, on the one hand, it exalted the consumption of goods (from packaged foods to television), cultural products (cinema, music

and television programming), considered emblematic of modernity; while, on the other, it promoted attitudes around politics, family and sexuality that aimed to preserve “traditional” practices and beliefs, as well as the undisputed authority of parents over their children, of husbands over their wives. We include in this movement the determinism over women’s domestic lives and the attribution of the individual over social problems.

In turn, the right-wing political group of those years perceived the strong threat from Marxist ideas, or from the infiltration of Soviet and Cuban agents. These groups could subvert public order and destroy precious values for society, such as family, religion and private property. The right-wing discourse favored the development of social control and supervision, focusing especially on the young population. This movement was used by the United States as a way to defend the “free world”. For example, we have the US intervention in the Korean (1950-1953) and Vietnam (1965 - 1975) wars.

This context was also marked by notable demographic growth, which meant a large percentage of children and young people between 1946 and 1964, to the point of being known as the baby boomer generation.

In the beginning, it was the beat generation – a cultural, artistic and social movement that emerged in the United States in the late 1950s and early 1960s – that revolted against the culture of civilization, where money was the only thing with which anyone cared.

The continuity of this questioning climate took paths, modes and perspectives, crossed by passions and controversies. Young people especially took on missions according to expressions such as: “I have a dream”, “The vote or the bullet” and “Under the asphalt is the beach”. Thus, movements that demanded another way of living, a new scale of values, began to define themselves. Hippieism, feminism, environmentalists, movements in favor of black rights, identities formed in sexual diversity and the university bourgeoisie had something to say and, to this end, they defined actions, habitus, aesthetics and even a new language, as well. such as poetry and music.

In music in 1955, the melody Rock Around The Clock, by Bill Haley & His Comets. gave rise to rock and roll. This is a musical style for a new generation and Elvis Presley imprinted his style and sensuality. In 1962, the Beatles left The Cavern club in Liverpool and, in 1964, arrived in the United States. Chubby Checker with his song The Twist announced a new style of dance, marked by individualism because it could be danced without a partner.

The hippie movement gained strength in San Francisco – the Summer of Love in 1967 – with its mantra of non-violence, it was linked to the fight against segregation led by King and Malcolm its political interference in the “countries of the South”.

The sixties were also the years of second wave feminism and the slogan “the personal is political”. The appearance of the “second sex” by Simone de Beauvoir, in 1949, had a great impact and it was in the 60s that the movement demonstrated itself against

inequality and unofficial prejudices (in fact), about sexuality, the family, the place of work and reproduction rights. The demonstrations of these groups were associated with other movements, such as university students against the Vietnam War, demonstrations against the censorship of freedom of expression, and European student movements; to the groups that promoted gay viewing of Stonewall (1968), whose repression gave rise to gay pride day.

*Flower power*⁴, a slogan used during the late 1960s and early 1970s turned into a pacifist and non-violence symbol used by the American counterculture movement. This movement took root as opposition in the Vietnam War. Hippies embraced pacifism by wearing embroidered flowers and vibrantly colored flowers in their hair. The term later spread as a modern reference to the Hippie movement and a culture of the body, medicine, music and psychedelic art. Its greatest influence was concentrated on the following aspects, considered revolutionary: customs, concept of sexuality, expression of affection, perspectives of masculinity and femininity, enjoyment as the objective of life as well as spirituality and harmony with nature (Nuñez Florêncio, 1993).

In 1967, the first major outdoor pop music festival (Woodstock) was held in the USA. Its powerful combination of youth culture, counterculture, massiveness and aesthetic rupture marked one of the high points of what the 60s meant.

All of these movements questioned social rules and values, as well as the capitalist political structure. The desire to transform the world was very strong among these groups, as was the hope that love and peace would prevail as the only foundations for life and relationships (Giddens, 2006; Beck; Beck-Gernsheim, 2001).

Authors, such as Isabella Cosse (2019), noted that even with the transformations underway, the challenges to the established sexual paradigm are undeniable as the social structure maintained the heterosexual standard as normative. Obviously, this did not imply ignoring the signs of modernity and the different manifestations of each local or regional reality.

3 The experiences of youth cultures in Latin America: brazilians and argentines in a long-term perspective

As Hall and Jefersson (2014, p. 55) point out, it is necessary to deconstruct the term “youth culture” that is normally used. The authors propose, as a more accurate image, the emergence of various types of youth subculture and their relationship with class cultures and cultural hegemony (on how this is maintained structurally and historically).

⁴ The expression was coined by Beat poet Alen Ginsberg in 1965 as “the means of transforming war protests into peaceful affirmative spectacles.” Disponível em: <https://www.floreseflores.com.br/flower-power-o-poder-das-flores-na-filosofia-hippie-nos-anos-60-e-70/>. Acesso em: 15 set. 2024.

Thinking about youth cultures implies paying attention to the way in which the social experiences of these “youth micro-societies” are expressed collectively, their lifestyles distinct from “adult institutions”. These youth cultures were configured in Western countries after the Second World War and were undeniably characterized by having specific spaces, times and logics.

As Olga Echeverría (2020 apud Hall; Jefersson, 2014) states, these youth cultures are crossed by the social structure and respective contexts of their time. Furthermore, these cultures also express counterculture through unique ideas that oppose hegemonic culture (Echeverría, 2020 apud Hall; Jefersson, 2014, p. 183).

Youth cultures in Latin America have their own characteristics, immersed in social, political and economic problems, as well as permeated by cultures typical of each social reality. This makes us wonder what happened to these youth cultures in Latin America, particularly in Brazil and Argentina?

When it comes to addressing the particular conditions of these countries, Brazil and Argentina, we see that the history of both was marked by colonial relations. These were established since the conquest of these territories that in the eyes of the colonizer were represented as peripheral countries, of little value, in the concept of the capitalist world order. A power relationship that makes both Brazil and Argentina subordinate to countries that represent models of high level development, the world order.

In this way, Brazilian and Argentine children and young people remained in a subordinate relationship in relation to children and young people from countries considered developed. Cultural, economic, geopolitical, ethnic and gender subalternity, in addition to age, marked and still mark the conditions of existence of the majority of Latin American children and young people.

Thus, when studying youth “from our own reality”, that is, from Latin America, we cannot forget to consider that the cultural matrix of Americanness is crossed by an intersectionality of ethnicity, gender, class and territoriality (urban and rural). Therefore, revealing the specificity of youth living in Latin America leads us to question their thoughts, feelings and actions, which, in turn, are often represented by devaluation (Abdala, 2002).

Since we have covered some prominent youth movements in world history, we will now address specific youth movements that were prominent in Brazil and Argentina. It is worth highlighting that a narrative of a comparative nature between two or more countries with a focus on their youth cultures is made up of comings and goings in its narration and, therefore, is covered with complexity, seams and articulations that lead us to revisit bibliography and respective interlocutors with which we learn to dialogue in the course of the literary narrative. Without a doubt, some gaps will remain as an invitation for researchers

to continue at another time, with other perspectives, logics and discoveries that provide greater precision.

We locate the youth groups that, from the sixties onwards, in Brazil, represented a period of great instability and turmoil in the country's politics. The discredit regarding politics in Brazil was established with the disappointment of the people and became increasingly fierce and permanent amid the successive crises of those governments that resulted in high inflation, accelerated deindustrialization, unemployment, an increase in the cost of living, among others.

Among the movements that represented the population's dissatisfaction and agitation were: the labor movement, whose union struggle demonstrated the strengthening of political and wage demands; the rural movement, whose struggle had repercussions throughout the national territory; and the movement of the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers with the discussion on agrarian reform (Brandão; Duarte, 1990).

Students and intellectuals engaged in politics and cultural activities to support the struggle for social transformation. Another movement linked to the National Union of Students (UNE) was the Popular Culture Center (CPC). This movement emerged in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo and spread throughout the country to call on student youth in their respective regions in 'favor' of building a "national, popular and democratic" left-wing culture (Brandão; Duarte, 1990, p. 61). It is worth highlighting that the student category was the one that gave the youth of this decade the greatest representation.

We can note that both in this decade and in the seventies, according to Abramo's assessment (1997), youth acquired:

[...] greater visibility, precisely through the engagement of middle-class young people, from secondary and university education, in the fight against the authoritarian regime, through mobilizations of student entities and engagement in left-wing parties; but also by cultural movements that questioned behavioral patterns – sexual, moral, in relation to property and consumption (Abramo, 1997, p. 31).

A notable event that we could not forget, occurred on March 31, 1964 with “[...] the military coup of 64 led by General Humberto de Alencar Castello Branco (1964-1967) who assumed the presidency of the Republic [...]” (Brandão; Duarte, 1990, p. 63). After the Coup of 64, a long period of military dictatorship was installed to realign and modernize the country with bourgeois capitalism. During this period, the population experienced intense demonstrations against repression by the armed forces, prisons and torture, murders and the disappearance of opponents in barracks. Among the fighting flags of these movements, we highlight freedom of thought and public policies to meet the demands of the population in general.

The decree of Institutional Act No. 5 (AI-5)⁵ and the closure of the National Congress, in 68, intensified political persecution, revocation of mandates, arrests, torture, deaths and exiles to silence the crisis that took hold in all social sectors of the country

Both in the 60s and 70s, the country experienced one of the most intense periods in intellectual and cultural production. These productions established new forms of representation and lifestyles. Furthermore, they represented strong channels for venting, denouncing and disseminating ideologies contrary to those in force in the country, since the repression of thought and expression contrary to the interests of the oppressors was active.

The songs, whose lyrics were protest, were welcomed among intellectuals and students as anthems for their movements. The media, at that time, even though it seduced in every way to maintain the loyalty of the young public to its calls for consumption, it was unable to stifle the dissident countercultural movements, engaged in the struggle for social transformations (Nascimento, 2002).

We consider it pertinent to make the following observation: that alongside the events and the characterization of generational groups of young people, recorded in the literature, there were other events and generational groups of young people with different characteristics. Even though they were not highlighted as representative of their times, they nevertheless participated in history as they did from it.

In the wake of intellectuals in the field of education in Brazil, we highlight the Pernambuco professor Paulo Freire (2018), who to this day represents a great reference for education that transforms the consciousness of the oppressed through the creation of the literacy method, whose bases lie in the process of critical consciousness of the oppressed population concomitantly with the acquisition of reading and writing.

In short, the youth of the 1960s and the 1970s had tenuous differences that, in some accounts, were blurred. Possibly, a characteristic that differentiated the generation of the seventies was the silence, which the marks of the dictatorship, experienced since the coup of 64, impressed on this youth, according to Nascimento (2002).

In the case of Argentina, the sixties and seventies were marked by the prohibition of Peronism, by the tolerance of the developmentalist government of Arturo Frondizi (1958-1962), by Guido's interregnum, by the government of the radical Arturo Illia (1963-1966) and the military dictatorships until 1973. A combination of factors that generated the armed struggle.

According to Manzano (2017), we can say that the country's youth emerged as a cultural movement in the last years of Perón's second presidency, when there was an increase

⁵ AI-5 gave the President of the Republic greater powers and suspended the right to habeas corpus (the constitutional guarantee of a person's freedom, while facing criminal proceedings) in cases of violation of the National Security Law (LSN) (Brandão; Duarte, 1990, p. 75).

in enrollment in secondary schools and universities, as well as a youth activity promoted by the State – in case of the Union of Secondary Students (UES), created in 1953.

This emergence of youth cultures ranges from guerrilla movements (both left and far right), to the presence of young people who found in music a way to express their revolt through the use of iconic figures, such as Tanguito, Moris or Lito Nebia. and his group “*Los Gatos*” which proposed an escape from a cruel world with their song *La Balsa*.

In the 60s and 70s, musical culture was modernized, with captivating music and youth idols such as Palito Ortega, Jony Tedesco, the sensuality of Sandro or Leonardo Favio⁶.

In the “Era” of the sixties and seventies, Argentina went from consumerism to rebellion, and from rebellion to revolution. The cultural and political authoritarianism imposed by the 1955 coup, the so-called Liberating Revolution against Peronism, gave rise to the development of a heterogeneous, multidimensional and radicalized rebel youth culture that reached its peak in the 1970s, as stated by Manzano (2017).⁷ But there were also “other young people”, in the words of Favero (2016), who remained silent, did not participate in political parties or armed groups. These young people placed themselves between the new and the traditional, entering the job market upon finishing their high school studies.⁸

The 1960s, as Pujol (2002) explains, witnessed an unprecedented publishing boom, with the proliferation of magazines, specialized publications and publishers. New ideas and literary genres were spread across different social strata, among which youth stood out especially.

⁶ Leonardo Favio was an actor and melodic singer who transcended the borders of Argentina with his fame. However, he publicly declared that he was interested in making money with his music to invest in his true passion: cinema. His films are recognized as an expression of that cinematographic movement of the sixties and seventies that renewed productions in Argentina. His two most acclaimed films were: *Chronicle of a Solo Child* and *The Romance of Aniceto and Francisca*. There were years of new audiovisual proposals that privileged the “author brand” (Di Salvo-Lionetti, in press).

⁷ In turn, Pujol (2002) maintains that the fall of Peronism did not mean a resounding cultural rupture. The Peronist identity remained strong despite various prohibitions. But Universities have changed and adopted an attitude of updating and modernization. There were then two levels. On the one hand, popular culture followed the same paths as previous decades. On the other hand, intellectuals were looking for a new cultural direction for society. Little by little, several signs of renewal emerged, the impact of which was decisive in the next decade.

⁸ There is an understanding that this social actor “[...] sought to impose the new but also defended the traditional, sought to revolutionize some customs but also maintained others. Young people who read Rodolfo Walsh but also Julio Cortázar, Jorge Luis Borges or Leopoldo Marechal, who listened to Elvis Presley, Bill Haley, Osvaldo Pugliese or Astor Piazzolla, started to wear more jeans and less gel, and still maintained the bolero culture but they already they were starting to listen to rock. That, despite the birth of television, they maintained the habit of listening to the radio and going to the cinema, although their taste for Hollywood gave way to French and Italian cinema of those years: “the imagination of many young people was shaped by soap operas, such as “About heroes and graves”, by Ernesto Sábato, but also with the zambas of Cuchi Leguizamón, the Beatles’ latest album, the comic strip “El Eternauta” and, in daily doses, strips such as “Mafalda” by Quino or the humorous vignettes by Landrú ” (Favero, 2016).

The appearance on television of youth programs such as Club del Clan (as an expression of that light and modern music), musical movements such as La Cueva and the incipient national rock with its own message, generated a youth mass culture that triggered a dispute over the definition of taste, especially around musical idols.

The tension of those years ranged from less effervescent reactions to those that opted for an armed exit. As Oscar Terán was able to suggestively express, these years were crossed by the “Che soul and the Lennon soul” (Terán, 1994). However, from the Onganía military coup in 1966 until the return of democracy in 1973, a vast inquisitive youth culture flourished and knew how to express itself through student, party and guerrilla movements.

In fact, the universities of the period 1956-1966 created the conditions of possibility for a “revolutionary student”, which became more present in the late sixties and early seventies. Political conditions fostered clandestine political socialization and, especially, Peronism in its most transformative aspects. The charismatic attraction of the Cuban revolution and the Guevarist focus and the effects of the youth student movements of the French May fueled the presence of youth on the streets. A paradigmatic movement like “El Cordobazo” in 1969 led to an alliance on the streets of the capital of a province in the interior of the country between the labor movement and the university and secondary student movement.

This “young body” went through militancy, fashion, sexual habits, the independence of young women, feminist demands. We noted the presence of the first gay and lesbian defense organizations that, although they had not managed to find much echo within the political fabric of the time, were fundamental to the movements of the 1990s and 2000s. In the militant action “the young body was placed” in the public sphere, as Manzano (2017) states.

Revolutionary militants produced a resistant body, conceived as young and – in general – masculine. But the young people who embraced revolutionary politics were not the only ones who “disciplined” their bodies to conform to an ideal: they shared this disciplinary impulse with their generational peers who incorporated the practice of dieting to lose weight in order to fit into shoes, fitted jeans⁹ (Manzano, p.14, 2017).

Around 1967 and 1974, armed struggle was one of the expressions of these youth cultures. Guerrilla groups emerged such as the Montoneros, affiliated with Peronism that emerged in the 1970s during the civil-military dictatorship called the Argentine Revolution, and the Popular Revolutionary Army (ERP), with a Marxist orientation and the armed wing of the Workers’ Revolutionary Party (PRT).

⁹ The action of “laying the body” inalienably marked revolutionary thought and action. The issue of masculinity in Argentine armed organizations was addressed by Cosse (2019).

Due to the influence of the Cuban Revolution and in the context of the Cold War, both in Argentina and other Latin American countries, these guerrilla organizations and “national liberation movements” emerged in an insurrectionary climate¹⁰. His actions contributed to the military dictatorship calling for free elections in 1973, in which the multi-party electoral front that formed the Frente Justicialista de Liberación (FREJULI) won, with the presidential candidacy of Peronist Héctor José Cámpora, a man close to Montoneros.

From right-wing sectors, the Italian anti-communist store Propaganda Due and the CIA made him resign, just 49 days later, after the Ezeiza massacre during the days of Juan D. Perón’s return, where young Montoneros clashed with groups right-wing – wing of Peronism. After Perón’s death, on July 1, 1974, the fierce internal Peronist war was unleashed with a policy of state terrorism ‘carried out’ by the right-wing parapolice organization called Triple A, commanded by López Rega, who became the Perón’s right-hand man: President María Estela Martínez de Perón.

Two months later, Montoneros decided to return underground and restart the armed struggle. On September 8, 1975, President María Estela Martínez de Perón issued a decree of annihilation (Decree nº 2,452/75¹¹), banned its activity and classified it as a “subversive group”, which initiated Operation Independence. On March 24, 1976, the government of Martínez de Perón was overthrown and an anti-communist civil-military dictatorship was established, which imposed a systematic regime of state terrorism and the annihilation of opponents.

4 From utopia to disenchantment and the expression of other cultural practices and feminine

Abramo (1997, p. 31) observes that the youth of the 1980s refused “[...] to take on political struggles and cultural causes that now, after the reworking of the 1960s [...]” began to be one of the aspects of the representation of the social category youth. However, Brandão and Duarte (1990, p. 95) point out that the youth of the eighties took up causes such as: “[...] the preservation of the environment and nuclear disarmament [...]”.

Due to the crisis that took place in Brazilian society, those young people of the 80s dedicated themselves to work, as a means of guaranteeing survival and supplementing their family

¹⁰ His first public action took place on May 29, 1970, with the kidnapping, subsequent revolutionary trial and murder of former anti-Peronist dictator Pedro Eugenio Aramburu, one of the leaders of the coup d’état that overthrew the government of President Juan Domingo Perón in 1955. Montoneros kidnapped the former dictator to subject him to a “revolutionary trial” for being a “traitor to the country”, having shot 27 people to suppress the uprising of Valle in 1956, and to recover the body of Eva Perón that Aramburu had kidnapped and made disappear.

¹¹ Available at: https://memresist.webhostusp.sti.usp.br/?page_id=239. Access at: 15 set. 2024.

income. Some young people managed to stay in school despite scheduling and financial difficulties. Others were unable to combine school with their work hours. In this way, they dropped out of school without even knowing how to read, write and perform the four operations.

In the 90s, political, economic and social difficulties intensified, along with hopelessness regarding solutions to both the economic crisis and the misery experienced by a significant portion of the population.

Neoliberal policy founded the economy, the circulation of consumer goods, as well as the supply of jobs. This policy did not present encouraging indicators in the various segments of Brazilian society. The fall of the then President, Fernando Collor de Melo in 1992, was initiated by the press and confirmed by his brother.

Against the president's stay at the time due to allegations of corruption in his government, a significant part of the youth took to the streets to protest and ask for his departure from the presidency. With faces painted in yellow-green colors, they were soon called painted faces. This event, according to Nascimento (2002), was considered one of the most significant in the country, after the political opening, since there was the mobilization of young people from all regions of the country.

We believe that the union and identification of youth in the 90s with collective causes among young people was possibly silenced by the growing social inequality that leads young people to establish their fighting territory, between preparation to master new technologies and competition in the market of work (Nascimento, 2002).

In line with market trends, youth received the same treatment as merchandise. The neoliberal discourse, as Bock, Furtado and Teixeira (2001, p. 13) say, is that everything depends exclusively on the young person. To do so, he must be "the best", the most "competent", the most "qualified". This motivated competition outside of ethical principles and individualism.

The characteristics that weigh on these young people in the 90s as disinterested, selfish and with exacerbated narcissism, without problematization and critical reflection on the world, hide the implications of the neoliberal discourse in the construction of these young people's behaviors and representations. This speech takes away, especially from young people, the possibility of criticism, and of claiming the State's responsibility for social issues and ills.

The decade of 2000 was marked as one in which left-wing Brazilian politics had its representative elected through the democratic process in 2002 and was re-elected in 2006. We can consider that from the years of this government, neoliberal policies lost strength and the called neodevelopmentalism, whose principle is based on the measures to be implemented by the State so that economic policy maintains its growth combined with income distribution.

Another aspect of this policy was the resumption of public investments in strategic infrastructure sectors. As for social issues, we can consider that the population, and especially young people today, still live with unemployment, even though the percentages are falling. Social and economic inequalities are still present and worsened under both governments: the first occurred from 2017 to 2018 and the second from 2019 to 2022.

In March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic began in the country. We had a devastating, uncertain and discouraging Brazilian scenario due to the measures that were implemented during the health crisis that took hold in the country. It is worth highlighting that the country was already in crisis, such as: social, political, economic and educational, accentuated by negationist policies, neoliberal privatists that did nothing to ensure the protection of the population, as well as resolving numerous Problems that persist are accentuated by the pandemic context.

In the case of Argentina, the emergence of the civil-military dictatorship in 1976 meant the culmination of a form of expression of youth political-cultural rebellion. Now, after this effervescence and ‘cultural howl’, the years to come have generated other expressions and practices of youth cultures.

The Falklands War, in 1982, was the beginning of the end of the military dictatorship, but also the manifestation of enthusiasm for the recovery of democracy. The resurgence of national rock and the return to the country of iconic figures such as “Negra” Mercedes Sosa filled the stadiums with young people who regained hope.

The participation of student movements was renewed in universities, following the list of professors who returned to the country with the normalization of study centers. High school students grouped together in student centers and revived the boys’ tradition of “Pencil Night”.¹²

There were other forms of youth participation in this transition to democracy (Vommaro; Cozachcow, 2017). There were years of experience of heterogeneous youth militancy, marked by the simultaneity of two political generations, towards a growing professionalization of activism, where democracy acquired centrality in militant practices and causes or with the growing specialization of militancy in universities and political parties.

After this new militancy, the nineties marked another moment of rupture. Neoliberal policies particularly affected young people, especially those from the popular classes. Unemployment and job insecurity led many of them to become – together with children from poor or homeless homes – the main excluded from the new modernity due to the following characteristics: they do not study, they do not work, they remain outside of formal society

¹² The Night of the Pencils is the name given to a series of kidnappings and murders of high school students. Medium occurred during the night of September 16, 1976 and following days, in the city of La Plata, capital of the Province of Buenos Aires, in Argentina. In total, ten secondary school students were kidnapped and tortured by task forces of the ruling dictatorship, of which six were murdered without their remains having been found to this day.

and they take refuge in formal society. These are “non-visible” vulnerabilities of poverty, crime or marginality (Salvia, 2002).

The 2001 crisis was the height of social and political tension in the streets demanding “Everyone leave”.¹³

However, in addition to these voices, Argentina once again recovered enthusiasm, especially among young people, with the Kirchnerist future (Retamozo; Trujillo, 2019) and the student, party militancy and different social movements such as feminism and the “green wave” considered more active.

The political rise of right-wing macrista forces and the withdrawal of the State marked another breaking point in these forms of militancy. Individual responsibility remained at the center of the scene and, with it, trust in collective actions was destabilized. As economic and social problems worsened, the main institutions that contained young people deteriorated.

Faced with the vertical and hierarchical knowledge monopolized by academic institutions, a more plural, horizontal and present-oriented knowledge emerges. This begins to compete with the visual culture of new technologies enthroned by the world of consumption. Young people are increasingly embracing virtual culture and written texts are becoming less used.

Without defined collective objectives that guide academic life, the school environment has thus become a disenchanting scenario, which, no matter how motivating it may be, young people are increasingly refractory to accepting any institutional norm (Dubet, 2006, p . 107 apud Durán Vázquez, 2010).

Add to this the traumatic experience of the Covid-19 pandemic that marked society as a whole. The Argentine population began to question the State’s responsibilities for public health. A part of these young people expressed their fury at the discrediting of traditional politics, and the attack on all forms of previous social movements (feminism, sexual diversity, Kirchnerist militancy).

Thus, that youth rebellion of the sixties and seventies, with its political-cultural battles, turned (from the upper, middle and lower middle sectors) to the right. As Stefanoni (2021) warns with his question: “did the rebellion work?”

5 Final considerations

We took on the ambitious task of reporting on the representations and experiences of youth cultures in Brazil and Argentina from around the sixties to the present day. An

¹³ The slogan “Let them all go!” brought together heterogeneous sectors that protested against the socioeconomic situation, the restrictions on the withdrawal of deposits from banks and the repressive measures of the last stretch of the Alliance government (1999-2001).

approach that sought to demonstrate, from a comparative and connected perspective, the singularities, but also – as readers will notice – the strong points of contact that exist in both societies due to the existence of a matrix that crosses them, such as the coloniality of our common history. This coloniality implied subalternity in the era of North-South capitalism. It means that our youth was ‘crossed’ by class, ethnic and gender inequalities.

But, beyond these intersectionalities and singularities of the historical experiences of Brazil and Argentina, it is possible to find common traits in the expressions of these young people. The challenges against the dominant order in the sixties and seventies had their own processes of subjectivation, experiences and cultural repertoires that permeated society as a whole.

Thus, in the years since the pandemic until the present day, the culture of this Brazilian youth has not failed to mark the existence of its projects for today and tomorrow with its footprints. However, these projects are still immersed in countless doubts and uncertainties, such as: returning to school and finishing studies, and/or the search for a job or internship or another path to achievement that has a quicker return. , since today’s generation of young people reveals concerns that are much more focused on the present time than on the future.

These and other aspects of this imprisonment of youth culture possibly hide the difficulty in being young and living the reality that presents itself in contemporary times in the face of the great difference to the virtual plane. Due to the uncertainties, the urgencies in preparing for life and entering higher education, in the field of work and for the protagonism of independence and autonomy, Brazilian youth, without discarding differences, live in a scenario of increasing complexity in the postmodern contemporary world.

If this was the trend in the years of the ‘cultural howl’, in the 21st century there are other forms of rebellion and youth demands with their political and ideological twists that we must understand. There is still much to investigate and reflect on beyond this writing, but we are aware that it is an imperative task that we, as social researchers, must undertake.

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